Strength In
Numbers

When neighbors unite, everybody wins!

ARLINGTON
STRONG
NEIGHBORHOOD
INITIATIVE

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City Manager's Office
NEIGHBORHOOD WAY.

**ARLINGTON'S STRONG
NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE**

REINVIGORATING NEIGHBORHOODS

"Working Together To Make Arlington Better"

ARLINGTON
STRONG
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INITIATIVE

Building Strong Neighborhoods

The emerging focus on neighborhoods as the strategy for community improvement invites new thinking and poses new challenges. Especially, it demands the engagement of citizens at a level that requires methods different from the past. Successful neighborhood initiatives are shaped locally to respond to the needs of populations and to assure that communities have a genuine sense of ownership.

It is necessary, therefore, to solicit stakeholder input, early and often. That means taking time to find out how neighborhood residents really feel about where they live, what their hopes are, what their fears are, what is working in their neighborhoods and what is not.

Most important, new partnerships must be created; partnerships between city departments and neighborhood groups, between local reform efforts and outside intermediaries, and between the grassroots stakeholders that bring the local wisdom and the outside investor who have access to power and capital.

Engaging and getting stakeholder input take on a variety of common forms: focus groups, individual interviews, surveys and open forums. These forums bring together all sectors of a community to identify problems, evaluate changing conditions and build collective approaches to improve the quality of life in the community.

In the case of Arlington's Strong Neighborhood Initiative, neighborhood focus groups, surveys and open forms will be utilized to help further identify common ground, centers of strength and opportunities for action in the community.

"Tell me and I'll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I'll understand."
— **CHINESE PROVERB**

Reinvigorating Arlington's Neighborhoods

Key to developing the City of Arlington's Strong Neighborhood Initiative is formulation of strategic alliances and partnerships that capitalizes on the influences of collaborative efforts. Emphasis of the initiative focuses on mobilizing citizens for dialogue, deliberations and collaborative problem solving.

Moving priorities for a neighborhood into practice will require partnerships and linkages with residents, neighborhood/homeowner associations, community-based organization, faith-based institutions, as well as cooperative efforts with a host of other city departments.

At the heart of all strategies to reinvigorate Arlington's neighborhoods are people; the youth and adults who reside in these neighborhoods, city staff, business and nonprofits who have committed to work together.

To facilitate moving ideas into practice, building the capacity of both the internal (staff) and external (people in neighborhoods) stakeholders must be incorporated in developing strategic action for the neighborhood initiative.

Building neighborhood capacity is a common activity that focuses on engaging and building the skills of neighborhood residents to understand the issues facing their community and to devise and implement an action plan. Critical to the success of ASNI will involve paradigm shifts, training of our employees and restructuring of departments in order to collaborate more effectively with citizens and community organizations.

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ASNI Goal, Objectives And Strategies

The goal of Arlington's Strong Neighborhood Initiative is to reinvigorate Arlington's neighborhoods and ensure sustainability by leveraging resources, increasing citizen participation and encouraging community stakeholder collaborations.

Objectives are to:

1. Increase neighborhood capacity
2. Increase citizen participation
3. Strengthen neighborhood networks
4. Develop ASNI

Strategies include:

1. Addressing neighborhood deficiencies through cross-functional collaboration between City departments, Arlington Independent School District, the Chambers of Commerce, other community stakeholders and active citizen groups.
2. Engaging and getting stakeholder input by conducting surveys, focus group discussions, and hosting a city-wide neighborhood summit.
3. Building citizen capacity to sustain solutions through training, education and leveraging resources. Reintroduce Neighborhood Academy which would include three curriculum tracts:
- **Basic Tract** - Accessing City Services;
- **Leadership Tract** - 7 Habits of Highly Effective Neighborhood Organizations;
- **Youth Tract** - Tomorrow's Leadership.
4. Development of a neighborhood resource guide, neighborhood resource center and neighborhood integrity teams.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."
— **MARGARET MEAD**